THE

GOVERNMENT SCHOOL OF DESIGN.

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Reprinted from the "Morning Chronicle" commencing 1st October, 1847;

CONTAINING

A REVIEW

OF THE

REPORTS AND EVIDENCE

OF THE

COUNCIL OF THE SCHOOL,

RECENTLY PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT;

AND AN EXPOSITION OF,

1. WHAT IS ORNAMENTAL ART, AND ITS RIGHTFUL POSITION; AND WHAT A SCHOOL OF DESIGN OUGHT TO BE.
2. WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL OF DESIGN IS, AND WHY IT IS WHAT IT IS.
3. WHAT MUST BE DONE TO MAKE IT WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE.

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THE

GOVERNMENT SCHOOL OF DESIGN.

Reprinted from the Morning Chronicle of Oct. 1st, 1847.

THE attention of the public has lately been directed to the Government School of Design by the presentation to Parliament, and publication, of the Reports of two Special Committees of the Council, accompanied by ample Minutes of Evidence furnished by the Director, Masters, and others.

Upon these documents, statements and opinions so inconsequent and contradictory have been put forth, with regard not only to the actual condition and proceedings of the School of Design, but to the subject of Ornamental Art in general, and the practicability of teaching Design, that we have been induced to devote some attention to this highly important and interesting matter, and purpose to assign a portion of our space to a careful review of the Reports and Evidence published by Parliament: in doing which we shall take occasion to consider—

1. What is Ornamental Art, and its rightful position; and what a School of Ornamental Design ought to be.

2. What the Government School of Design is, and why it is what it is.

3. What must be done to make it what it ought to be.

Ornamental Art, or the Art of producing Ornament, may be correctly defined to be the methodic superaddition of Beauty to the necessary constructions of Utility; including within its scope every such addition to them, however simple. "The purpose of Ornamental Design," says Dr Cooke Taylor in his Letter to the Committee, "is to superadd to the utility of industrial productions such artistic decoration as, without destroying their usefulness, will render them pleasing to that mental faculty, or rather that combination of mental faculties, known by the name of Taste." It is applicable, in a greater or less degree, to all the useful products of industry; not, as appears to be imagined by some archæological dilettanti, con-

fined to the artistic productions of past ages, to Architectural Sculpture and Mural Decoration, but extending to a vast variety of objects throughout the different departments of Manufacture and Industrial Labour; more especially to the productions of Upholsterers, Cabinet Makers, Paper Stainers, Wood Carvers, House Decorators, Modellers of Ornaments in Bronze and Plaster, Sculptors of Stone and Marble, Jewellers; Workers in Gold, Silver, and Brass; Bookbinders, Porcelain and Glass Painters, Calico Printers, Pattern Designers and Draughtsmen, Copper Plate and Wood Engravers; and to Manufacturers of Silk, Cotton, and Woollen Fabrics, Lace and Embroidery, Carpets, Shawls, China, Glass, Earthenware, Ornamental Lamps, Papier-Maché Tea Trays, and innumerable fancy articles of Furniture, Dress, and Adornment: in fact, to use the appropriate words of the late director, Mr Dyce, "The real use of Ornamental Art is to hide, by a coating of Beauty, the skeleton-like contrivances of Utility and Practical Science."

Of the great importance of rightly cultivating this Art, as a means of increasing our national wealth and revenue, by enhancing the value of manufactured produce and skilled labour, little needs to be said: it is too palpably obvious, both as a rational inference and experienced fact. The power of the Arts of Design to increase commercial wealth is shown in the history of various countries since the revival of painting in Italy. At that period commerce and painting were at the lowest ebb. Bad taste was exhibited in every article of manufacture throughout the Continent. The merchant found no incentive to traffic in other countries with the products of his own. A general poverty of style, and crowded ornament, which overlaid instead of enriching the work of the artisan, were the chief characteristics of every product of mechanical industry. But no sooner had the arts of Design attained to excellence than a sudden change appeared. Florence experienced a rapid improvement and extension of her manufactures, and became the emporium of the products of other kingdoms. Every material of labour acquired, from the influence of Design, a value wholly independent of itself, and far surpassing its own price; and the Jewellery, Vases, Stuffs, and Furniture of Florence found their way to every part of the world.

In Flanders, the genius of Rubens energised industry in the workshops of the artisans, and by the designs of his school, their Tapestries, Carpets, Lace, and various other ornamental manufactures were rendered famous throughout

Europe. In France, under Richelieu and his successors, a remarkable impetus was given to commercial industry by the zealous efforts of the ministry to promote the culture and application of Design, not only in the celebrated Gobelins manufacture of Tapestry, for which were procured from all parts draughtsmen, designers, painters, dyers, and engravers, but among workers in Gold, Silver, Brass, Ivory, &c. under the celebrated Le Brun. The sumptuous porcelain manufacture of Sèvres, and that of our own Wedgewood, furnish eminent instances of ornamented manufactures becoming abundant sources of national wealth. Art says to the enterprising manufacturer, "Behold what you can reach;" and to the tasteful purchaser, "Behold what you desire."*

And here we must not omit to denounce as most erroneous and mischievous an opinion insidiously promulgated, and unfortunately not discountenanced by the Corporate Authorities in Art, that Ornamental Art is in itself a study so humble as to be unworthy to engross the faculties of any above the class of "Artisan." In opposition to this depreciating dogma, we may adduce the following assertion of Dr Cooke Taylor, in his Letter to the Committee:—

"A Designer has to invent; and the power of inventing requires that the *mental faculties* should be developed by *general knowledge*. It needs not to dwell an instant on so palpable a truth."

The question between the Fine Artist and the Ornamentist is far less one as to degree of intellectual power, than as to application of that power. The exercise of similar intellectual energies is demanded. Art is, in each case, the exponent of thought, and the rank assignable to the manifestation of such thought must depend upon the powers of mind with which the inventor is gifted. As in "Fine Art" there is an humble and an elevated grade of production, so in "Ornamental Art" there is a graduated scale, from diagrammatic design to the richest architectonic invention—from the simplest calico pattern to the epic enrichment of a golden salver. In regard to the beautiful in the works of Nature, the "Artist" and the "Ornamentist" labour on common ground; the difference consisting simply in the end to which their energies are directed. If we would estimate rightly the character and position to be assigned to Ornamental Art, we must look, not to what it hitherto has been, or now is, in this country: we must rather regard the distinguished rank it has held, and the won-

* See Dechazel, "Discours sur l'Influence de la Peinture sur les Arts d'Industrie Commerciale."

derful results it has achieved, when fostered, as of old in Greece and throughout medieval Europe, and honoured, as in modern France and Germany. In scrutinising the renown of the greatest names in the Art of former days, we find no small portion of its lustre reflected from contributions to this section of artistic labours; and, in reference to some of the greatest Artists, we discover how eagerly it was sought to attract the aid of their genius to embellish the most ordinary fabrics of their fatherland. To pass over the well-known instances of Finiguerra, Benvenuto Cellini, and Ghirlandaio, who might be claimed as professional Ornamentists, we may recall to mind the fact that the Cartoons of Raffaelle were designs for *tapestry;* that the ornamentation of the Vatican occupied no small portion of his attention; and that the pottery of a small Italian State became a fruitful source of income from his suggestive sketches. When Holbein was invited to portray the beauties of Henry's Court, his attention was also considered worthily directed to the decoration of the fronts of houses, and to the improvement of the elegant productions of the Goldsmith and the Bookbinder. "Giulio Romano, like Raffaelle," says Lanzi, "gave rise to a great number of ornamental artificers. From his general ideas of beauty and proportion he deduced rules for the direction of every kind of artistical work, and thus distinguished himself in an age when the influence of the great masters was extended from the noblest works of Art to Vases, Earthenware Plates, Cornices of Wood—in short, to every grade of Ornamental Manufacture."

To the same effect we might adduce other illustrious names without number, such as Giotto, Ghiberti, Francia, Albert Durer, Quentin Matsys, Hogarth, Flaxman, Stothard, Bailey, &c. &c. But there is no need of adding to the list; we have mentioned instances sufficient to prove that, in the most exalted epochs of Art, the greatest men have laboured in Ornamental Design with a zeal which could result only from a conviction that it was worthy of their noble powers, whilst it is equally evident that the early practice of Ornamental Art was frequently a stepping-stone to the highest positions in Painting and Sculpture.

We now proceed to observe that the correlative Science of Ornamental Art (for it implies no less exercise of intellect than of sentiment and manual skill) consists in observing and abstracting the beautiful in Nature and Art, both as to form and colour, and in the induction of PRINCIPLES as to proportion, arrangement, fitness, harmony, contrast, symmetry, repetition, &c. which constitute *the ultimate criteria* of all Ornamental Design.

"Many of the forms of beauty in the ornaments of Greek architecture are truly perfect, but they are so solely *because they are natural*" (we quote from the Government School of Design Drawing Book, published by the Council): "it is therefore by the study of Nature—by referring those forms to their natural types—that the student will learn the real grounds on which they have been esteemed so perfect; and in learning this he will discover at the same time how wide a field in the domain of beauty still remains for his own cultivation. In the great School of Design in Lyons, the beautiful designs for silk embroidery are almost invariably made from living flowers and plants. The student might from the first be taught to refer to Nature for the verification of every line and form of design which is placed before him as an exercise in drawing. There is no one who doubts that Nature must be held up as the primary source whence, as much now as ever, all the forms of beauty applicable to the uses of the ornamentist must be derived. A reference to natural principles and forms, and to natural modes of decoration, will satisfy us how perfect, so far as it goes, the decorative art of the ancient Greeks must be esteemed. But the same reference will convince us that the architects of the middle ages, while they adhered in an equal degree to natural laws of decorative beauty, made a far more extensive application of the modes of decoration suggested by Nature. Yet all that can be said of either is, that they have followed more or less truly in her track. They have discovered and applied certain of her laws—they have made use of certain of her forms and modes of beauty: but this is all. They have not explored the path of Nature to its termination. Her treasures are still unexhausted and inexhaustible; and it is by descending into the mine and working for ourselves that we shall discover, on the one hand, the value of the experience afforded us by ancient artists, and, on the other, the exuberance of materials that still remain unemployed."

No metaphor can be more true. The mine to be explored contains an infinite store of wealth, with which the material products of our country may be constantly enriched. There is no deficiency of willing labourers, but assuredly the student needs the most efficient guidance in his researches. The Royal Academy has furnished its individual pioneers—Flaxman, Stothard, Bailey, and others of that body, have not been backward in their explorations; but zealous Corporate encouragement to Ornamental Art has been totally withheld, and neither in the studies of its Schools, nor in the Lectures of its Professors, has the attention of either Artist or Designer been led to the contemplation of this Science. Such investigations in Ornamental Art have become the paramount duty of a School of Design.

We now enter upon the consideration of what a School of Design ought to be; and first, we would observe that it is essential to guard against an impression that by such an Institution is to be understood "a ragged school"—an assemblage of pauper boys and plodding pedagogues, employed in mastering the mere alphabetic rudiments of artistic knowledge.

Those who entertain this opinion evince both their ignorance of what such Institutions actually are, and their utter incompetence to form any just and liberal estimate of what they ought to be.

Schools of Design, as being addressed more especially to the cultivation of Art in its various applications to Manufacture, having regard to an immense range of multifarious products of industry, are essentially more popular and general in their objects and agency than Academies intended exclusively for the education of Historical Painters and Scupltors. They must constitute in fact, an integral portion of any national system for educating the great mass of the people, and should, therefore, be wisely established and liberally maintained by Government, upon principles carefully educed from the Philosophy of Art, in connection with the Science of Political Economy. A School of Ornamental Design is obviously an Institution the *essential object* of which is to *teach* Ornamental Design, without the thorough fulfilment of which it cannot deserve the name. It should, therefore, provide the most efficient means for imparting the necessary elementary and mechanical knowledge in Drawing, Painting, and Modelling, observing no line of demarcation between the pupil who may hereafter practise high Art and the Ornamentist. Furthermore should be imparted a sound historical knowledge of the various styles of ornamental art which have preceded us, verifying the *principles* on which those works were produced, by reference to their natural types.

It is evident, however, that if the instruction stop here, but little more than consistent reproduction of the works of former times can be expected. It is, therefore, indispensably necessary that the student should be taken to the great Normal School of Nature, and be there taught the modes and principles of natural decoration. The beauties of Nature must be carefully studied and developed, and the student must be taught the general application of natural principles and forms to the various purposes and modes of ornament and decoration. He must then be *methodically exercised* in producing new combinations of the ideas thus acquired; this being really, and in truth, what alone can be called "teaching Design," and, most assuredly, the only teaching which can ever result in forming original designers. It is equally indispensable that a School of Design should supply a certain amount of instruction in the condition and processes of Manufactures, in order to enable the students, in the course of their school exercises, so to understand and comply with those con-

ditions as to produce designs not only of high artistic merit, but capable of being reproduced by the manufacturer. This is no mere hypothetical theory of our own; it stands proved by the official statements before the public, from which we shall now offer some extracts, observing that, at the present time, ten years after the establishment of the Government School of Design, it is amazing it should be at all requisite to determine what such a school ought to be; and yet that it is requisite, is shown by the contents of the Parliamentary documents before us.

The School opened in 1837, with the following promising announcement in the printed Prospectus, then issued by the Council:—

"It having been considered important that instruction should be afforded to those engaged in the preparation of designs for the various branches of the manufactures of this country, the School of Design has been established under the sanction of the President of the Board of Trade, in the rooms at Somerset-house lately occupied by the Royal Academy, for the purpose of teaching Design."

Stating, moreover, that—

"Lectures will be given on the principal subjects connected with Ornamental Art."

The Council, in officially declaring, in 1843, the nature and objects of the Institution, state that—

"Though this School to a certain extent occupies common ground with ordinary drawing schools, it has beyond this a specific purpose, from which, in fact, it derives its name. It is termed *a School of Design, not a School of Drawing.* Nor is it a school for every kind of Design, but for one kind only, viz., Ornamental; to which accordingly all the exercises of the pupils, even from the commencement, must have a reference.

"The acquisition of skill in drawing is only a preliminary step to *the real business of the School,* which is *to teach the art of designing ornament,* both in respect to its general *principles* and its specific *application to manufacture;* and in the second place, that the study of drawing must, in every instance, be conducted with reference to the use to which it is to be applied. The models set before the students, while they are learning to draw, must be either such as will conduce to their familiarity with some form of ornamental art, or such as will serve as materials for their future practice of Ornamental Design—as the remains of ancient Architectural Ornament, the Human Figure, Birds and other Animals, Flowers, Fruit, Shells, Corals, Minerals, &c. The students are to be taught, first, to make accurate copies of the objects set before them; and, secondly, to make such arrangements of the forms and colours copied as will admit of their being repeated at intervals in the manner of patterns.

"The students are to be made acquainted with the characteristic distinctions of the ancient and more recent Styles of Ornamental Art, and are to have pointed out to them the *natural sources* whence the general forms and details of each style have been derived."

A Committee of the Council also say—

"We think that we should endeavour to devise and carry into effect a systematic and complete course of instruction which should embrace the THEORY and PRINCIPLES of Ornamental Design (including the history and explanation of the different styles), and the application of those principles to the various kinds of manufacture, to the end that the power of making *original designs* may be acquired by the pupil, and may be *exercised* by him, whilst in the School.

"We conceive that this should include Lectures upon the several subjects of instruction, copiously illustrated by examples; that a course of reading of appropriate books should be pointed out and encouraged; that select examples of Ornamental Art, including actual patterns of manufactures, should be analysed by the Lecturers and the Masters, in order to exhibit to the students the *principles* on which they are constructed, and to explain to them, as may be possible, the causes of beauty in such examples, so as to lead them gradually to the *exercise of the Inventive Faculty*, in forming for themselves new combinations from nature and art applicable to ornamental manufactures and decoration.

"It appears to your Committee to be essential that the Masters (those of them who teach Design) should possess a general knowledge of the peculiar conditions to be observed in producing designs for manufactures, and that they should communicate this knowledge of the capabilities of manufacture to the students in the Design Section of each class.

"*The habit of making original designs should be encouraged* and promoted by preparing suitable themes or subjects for its *exercise*, and the success or failure of the attempts should be pointed out and explained."

Class I. is stated to be—

"For instruction in the History, Principles, and Practice of Ornamental Design; and its application to the various processes of manufacture, including the study of oil, tempera, fresco, encaustic, and wax painting; and the practice of various branches of Decorative Art.

Mr Townsend, Master of the Painting and Modelling Classes in the Evening, replies to the question—

"Do you think it desirable that in a Government School there should exist such a class?—I think it not only desirable, but that a School of Design without such a class is in some measure, *per se, an absurdity;* it may be a very good School of Art without that, but without that it cannot be a School of Design."

Mr Bellenden Ker, Vice-Chairman, says to Sir Richard Westmacott, R.A.,—

"You think that we ought *to teach original design?*"

To which Sir Richard replies—

"Certainly."

The same Documents inform us that the duties of the Director are—

"To teach the first class (the class of original design).

"To give Lectures upon the History, Principles, and Styles of Ornamental Art, and also especial explanatory Lectures upon the particular designs in progress.

"To prepare a syllabus of such Lectures, for the instruction and use of the Masters in the Provincial Schools.

"To make original drawings and designs for the School, and to superintend the making of others of the same description by the first class."

Mr Townsend states that—

"The peculiar value of the School of Design rests not alone in the conveying instruction in ornamental art, but in creating a respect for it. In this country at the present moment, low ideas of ornamental art are entertained. It is considered even by many 'artists' as something belonging exclusively to the 'artisan.' Design (understanding by that word Ornamental Art) will never thoroughly succeed in this country unless we educate every Ornamentist in such a way that if he happen to be a great artist by nature, he may follow 'High Art' as his profession; or that if he happen not to possess that peculiar genius, he still may effect something in Ornamental Art satisfactory to his ambition, and be able to carry into it a great deal of the higher principles of art.

"The Chairman (to Mr Horsley): Do you concur in that?—Yes; I think it would be most undesirable to attempt the education of the Ornamentist by any inferior mode of instruction than that in which the student of High Art is trained. I think that in Mr Poynter's able Report upon the French Schools of Design it is clearly shown that the true method of educating the Ornamentist is, to give him a sound practical knowledge of the general principles of Fine Art."

The evidence of Mr Thomson, the eminent Cotton Printer, of Clitheroe, "as proceeding," says the Committee, "from a gentleman of great taste and experience in manufacture, deserves attention. "It has never been my good fortune," says Mr Thomson, "to produce one good designer who deserved that name. This is a sorry account, and yet it is a true one, of the state of pattern drawing in the great printing locality of England; nor will it be improved till your Schools turn out a new class of educated men—educated in the general Principles of Design, as applicable to all Ornamental Art whatever. The manufacturers of England want educated Designers,"—that is, well-trained Ornamental Artists, competent to produce original Designs, and not mere Draughtsmen and Copyists.

From the foregoing extracts, it is perfectly clear that the Council, in all their announcements, distinctly recognise an essential difference between a School of Drawing and a School of Design.

If the sole object were simply to give instruction in Drawing and Copying, and to provide means merely commensurate with, and adequate to, the attainment of *that* object, it could not be deemed necessary to purchase extensive collections of costly Examples of Art, and to engage, as Instructors, such Artists and men of genius as Messrs Dyce, Herbert, Townsend, and Horsley. The Council officially state that their

School of Design has a specific object, from which it derives its name: that it is a School of Ornamental Design, and not a School of Drawing; that Drawing is only preliminary to *the real business of the School,* which is to teach the Art of Designing Ornament, both in its general principles and specific application to Manufactures; that the course of instruction should embrace the Theory and Principles of Ornamental Design, and indicate the natural sources whence the Forms and Details of each style have been derived; that copiously-illustrated explanatory Lectures should be delivered; that select examples of Ornament should be analysed for the purpose of developing each Constructive Principle and Cause of Beauty; that the exercise of the Inventive Faculty should be encouraged and promoted by the habit of forming new combinations from Nature and Art; and that the Students, while in the School, should be exercised in making Original Designs, subject to critical guidance; and, moreover, that it is essential to instruct them in the peculiar conditions to be observed in producing Designs for Manufactures.

To this may be added the testimony of two of the most important Provincial Schools, as declared in the printed Reports of their Committees:—

"The well-trained *exercise of the inventive faculty* (say the Manchester Committee) is the true end and object of all our efforts, involving, in the widest sense, the education of both head and hand; and if only *one* THOROUGHLY-ACCOMPLISHED and ARTISTICAL DESIGNER go forth in a year, more will have been done to affect the character of our Industrial Art, and the commercial value of our Manufactures, than if a thousand students crowded our rooms, and quitted them annually [as mere Draughtsmen].

"The high purpose of Schools of Design (say the Glasgow Committee) is to create A NEW CLASS OF DESIGNERS, carefully educated in the knowledge of Art, thoroughly alive to the perception of the Beautiful, and skilful to carry those perceptions into practical execution."

In reviewing the points as to "What is Ornamental Art, and its rightful position," and "What a School of Design ought to be," we have endeavoured to present an exposition of the nature of this Art, and of the declared objects of the Institution established by Government for its cultivation; showing that, from the announcement of the first Prospectus of the Council, in 1837, to the Reports of the same Body in the present year, 1847, that declared object has been "to teach Design," and to impart, by means of explanatory Lectures, a knowledge of the Principles of Ornamental Art. Our readers, bearing in mind the professed and promised *agenda* of the Council, shall now be presented with full particulars

respecting its positive *acta*, from which it will appear that, during the ten years which have transpired since the School was founded, the Council, in their official announcements and public declarations, have continued to "hold the word of promise to the ear" only to "break it to the hope." Consequently the Masters, Students, and the public, growing impatient from hope deferred, have from time to time complained, and demanded that, in exchange for the many thousands of pounds so freely granted by Parliament for accomplishing the objects of the School, more should be done towards the fulfilment of the Council's declared intentions; seeing that, year after year, the Council have reiterated intentions of doing what ought to be done, but have not done it. They have only maintained that it should be done, and have maintained Mr Wilson at a salary of 400*l.* a year to do it; he having maintained nothing but opinions; differing each from the other suddenly and diametrically, and being *for* this or that, or *against* it, according to the exigencies of the moment —everything by fits, and nothing long. The Council having thus passed ten years in expressing intentions, is now called upon to fulfil them; but it is sad to find that, after this long period of gravid gestation, there is every appearance of a case of abortion. The students and the public, weary of magniloquent promises and protracted expectations, say, "Show us something for our money,"—and the Council show them—Mr Wilson.

From the printed Annual Reports of the Council, it appears that the number of the students has decreased; that in June, 1843, when the present Director took charge of the School, the male students amounted to 272, and that in the same month of the present year the number was forty less. In the same period of four years, the mercury in the thermometer of the Design Class has descended to zero. This all-important Class 1—the vital essence of a School of Design—without which an Institution so called must be a most egregious and palpable instance of the *lucus à non lucendo*, has been for many years officially exhibited on paper as one for instruction in the History, Principles, and Practice of Ornamental Design, and its application to the various processes of Manufacture, including the study of Oil, Tempera, Fresco, Encaustic, and Wax Painting, and the practice of the various branches of Decorative Art. To teach this First Class is the principal duty of the Director; and lest any misconception might occur as to his exclusive right to this responsibility, he writes to the Masters, on their appointment, and says, "*My*

chief charge is the highest class—that of Ornamental Design."

Why the Director does not teach this First Class shall be explained hereafter, in his own peculiar way and words.

So long ago as July, 1845, a large body of the senior students, after having for ten months complained to the Council (for which forty of them were expelled) of the deficiency of all instruction in Design, were induced to address a Petition to Parliament for an inquiry into the condition of the School; stating that "Being students of long standing in the School, and having passed through the elementary studies fitting us to fill its highest classes, we have long sought in vain for that instruction in the Principles and Practice of Ornamental Design which the Council, in their Report of 1843-4, page 14, assign as the tuition to be given to the First Class, and the giving of which constitutes the real value of a School of Design, and distinguishes it from a mere Drawing School." To the same effect we find opinions expressed by numerous other individuals, whose competence to judge rightly in such matters cannot be doubted; such as Mr Herbert, R.A.; Mr Dyce, A.R.A.; Mr Redgrave, A.R.A.; Mr Poynter, Mr Pugin, Mr Horsley, Mr Townsend; and lastly, by a special Committee of the Council itself, who declare that they recognise "the necessity of proceeding much further than at present in teaching the Principles and Practice of Ornamental Design." This, after reviewing the Evidence, appears to be a very qualified condemnation of the absence of all instruction in Design; for Design is not at all taught in the School. No Class No. 1 exists at the present moment, nor for many months has existed. The excuse offered by the Director for not teaching Design, namely, that there are no pupils in the School fitted to enter upon this study, proves only, if true, that the School, after existing ten years, has not succeeded in imparting to the students the elementary instruction requisite to enable them to commence that which it is the peculiar province of the School to teach. Composition, in the Director's vocabulary, appears to mean judicious plagiarism and copying; for, speaking of Composition, he says, "If this question points at Design, or rather Composition, a prodigious amount and variety of Examples should be furnished." Again, writing to Mr Horsley, he says, "You will superintend what may, perhaps, be termed our class of Composition, in which such prints or drawings as those described by Mr Eastlake may be *copied*." Strange as it may appear, he evidently cannot discern between the executive, and the inventive,

faculty. Witness the following quotation from his evidence, where, in speaking of a student, he says—"I cannot help thinking that if he was a competent *draughtsman* before he made a Design, there would be but few faults to find with his *Design*." The baneful influence of such opinions on the part of the Director, whose especial duty is to *teach Design*, is obvious, and we find it to be universally asserted, that instead of a School of Design it is a "School of Copying." Mr Townsend says—"At present copying is the plan laid down, and thus the pupil is led to no higher exertion of his faculties than the desire to imitate."

Mr Burchett, a student, says—

"Instead of any attempt being made to teach the principles of any style of ornament, the only principle acted upon is that of continual copying.

"And this system is not merely suffered, but encouraged; indeed, I may say that it is the only system taught. Often have I seen, during the competitions for the prizes, each competitor loaded with his materials for the evening; amounting (where some variety was aimed at) to five or six large books, which he was compelled to guard with the most jealous care, lest his competitor (less fortunate than himself in coming early to the School) should carry off all the knowledge of ornament he possessed. If the design was one of less pretension, the first volume of a work would supply one moiety of the student's production, the second the remainder. Often, when the student has asked for some instruction in the principles of what he was about to commence, he has been answered with, 'I know something that will exactly suit you,' and he has been forthwith shown some cast from, or engraving of, some specimen of ancient or modern art, which, adroitly connected with another portion of the same style, has of course produced a very original design."

Such is the Director's complete perversion of the declared objects of the School—such his palpable ignorance of the duties so explicitly described to, and eagerly undertaken by, him at the time of his appointment. Further proof of this perversion will be found in the following extracts. Mr Redgrave, A.R.A., says—

"You want a class of Original Design, which is not in the School at all. You teach the Figure to a certain extent, but there is no application of the Figure as a mode of Ornament. There is at present no class of Design. The School has been ten years in operation, but I do not think there is a single student who is taught Design in the school. He is taught Drawing, but not Design."

Mr Townsend says—

"What is the fact? We have at the present moment, in the very 'Head' Department of all the Schools, a School of Design without a *bonâ fide* Class of Design. The highest objects pointed out in the previous Blue Books—such as the 'Lectures on Ornament,' the 'practicability of Design,' and the direct and intimate union of working process with Theoretic Art, are now totally disregarded."

Mr Horsley, Master of the Figure Class, says—

"I find that in the list of the duties of the Director, he is to give Lectures upon the History, Principles, and Practice of Ornamental Design. Moreover, he is to form and conduct a first class or classes of Design; and he is to prepare original models and sketches for the instruction of the students. All these I consider to be points of vital importance to the School; yet during the whole year and a half that I have been connected with the School, not one of these duties has been performed, neither has any attempt been made to perform them. Our School has been for the last year a mere Drawing School, and in no way a School of Design. We say that Design is not taught; but we most strenuously contend that it should be taught."

"Mr Townsend: We contend that that which is professed to be taught, is not taught as respects Design."

Mr Richardson, Master of the Architectural Classes, says—

"The real Principles of Design which, as a man of business, I know must be taught the young designer, we are not allowed to teach."

Mr Poynter, Inspector of the Provincial Schools, says—

"The Schools will inevitably stand still, if, indeed, they do not retrograde, unless measures are taken, and that speedily, for their development as Schools of Design, by providing for the instruction of pupils in the Principles of Art. It is the universal complaint that the pupils seldom remain long enough in the Schools to go through a regular course of study. The fact is, that they have nothing to look forward to beyond the mere learn ng to draw."

Mr Burchett, a student, says—

"As a School of Design it is an utter and complete failure. When has the instruction in the History and Principles of Ornament been given? When have the Lectures so prominently placed in the Reports and Prospectuses of the School been delivered? And where are the students who have been taught the History and Principles of Ornament in the School? Some students have been three or four years in the School, in its higher classes, and have been unable to obtain any instruction in those higher branches of education, although devoting their whole time to study in the School, and have at length left it, to endeavour to acquire elsewhere the knowledge so peculiarly the province of the Government School to impart, and under pretence of imparting which so much money has been expended."

We find Mr Wilson also giving evidence to the non-existence of the Class of Design. Being asked by Mr Bellenden Ker, Vice-Chairman of the Council, the following question,—

"I observe that there is a Class of Practical Ornamental Design in your Programme, and I observe in the statement of the duties of the Masters that you reserve to yourself the teaching of that class. Have you taught that class during the last three months in the Evening School? Mr Wilson answers, No; because no such class then existed, nor does exist at the present moment."

"Mr Ker then asks, Have you been in the Evening School the last three months? and receives for answer, No."

As it is in the evidence furnished by the Director himself that we find the most conclusive proof of his own incompetence, and discover the disastrous influence of his management of the School, we shall carefully quote from this portion of the Report such passages as serve to exhibit the remarkable inconsistency of his assertions, and his admissions of neglect and inability. To questions from the Committee, Mr Wilson replies as follows :—

"But previously to last October you attended the School for the purpose of teaching?— I attended the School for three nights every week for the purpose of performing my duty as Director of the School.

"For the purpose of *teaching Original Design?*—If I had pupils.

"If there were pupils according to your judgment fitted to study Design, and to enter the Class No. 1, what would you teach them there?—I should in obedience to my instructions, to the best of my ability, try to *teach them Design.*

"Do you in the School teach by yourself or your deputies any class of Design?—I *have done so myself*, and *have been aided by my colleagues.*

"You yourself in teaching the Class of Original Design, *as you have done*, conceive that you are competent?—*No, I never thought so.*

"You stated that you did not think it would be expedient or even possible to teach Original Design?—*That is my opinion:* I do not admit that Original Design can be taught at all.

"Then you would give up the Class of Original Design altogether?—*Certainly.*

"Would you strike out that class in remodelling the Prospectus?—*I would.*

"Then you would strike out all teaching Original Design in the School?—*I would.*

"Mr Bellenden Ker: I observe that you reserve to yourself the teaching of Practical Design. When do you teach it?—Whenever we have students engaged in making Designs, I take charge of them.

"Have you within the last four months ascertained whether there are in the Evening School any students fit to be put into that class?—To my knowledge there are not.

"How can you have that knowledge if you have not been in the School?—Because I know all that they can do.

"Without having been in the School in the last four months, you are quite convinced that there is no person fit to be taught that Practical Design which you reserve to yourself the right of teaching?—No answer.

"According to the present routine of the School, is there in the School, morning or evening, any Class of Design?—There is no Class of Design at this moment, because, in my judgment, as Director, there is no pupil fitted to study Design, according to the views which I take.

"Mr Bellenden Ker: You said that no Master should preside over any Class of Orignal Composition; and that when a pupil had passed through the whole course of education, he should then make Original Designs. You do not mean to say that making Original Designs is no part of his education?—I think that doing so ought to be the result of his education.

"Then would you have him make Original Designs in the School, not under the presidency of any Master?—Not under the presidency of any Master.

"What is the Practical Design which you reserve to yourself the power of teaching? Is it Original Composition?—If the Committee had examined me upon all these subjects *seriatim*, I should have been able to explain better."

Here we have the Director asserting that he has attended the School for the purpose of teaching Original Design; which implies, of course, his conviction that it *can* be taught.

That if there were pupils fit to be taught, he would try to teach them Design.

That he *has* taught the Class of Design; and that, in teaching it, he has been aided by his colleagues.

That, in teaching the Class of Original Design, as he has done, he never thought himself competent to teach it.

That he does not consider it expedient, or even *possible*, to teach it.

That he would certainly give up the class of Original Design altogether.

That he would strike out all teaching of Original Design in the School.

And although, as aforesaid, he *has* taught Original Design, he does not admit that Original Design can be taught at all.

Manes of Aristotle! Scholastic shades of the Wizard Doctors of Dialectic Art! "Illuminate," "Subtle," "Irrefragable"—sorely bothered would every one of you be to deduce, by dint of syllogistic logic, any consistent meaning from this congeries of contradictory asseverations. It would puzzle the Egyptian Sphinx herself to unriddle it. In truth, it would be a scandal and degradation to human reason to attempt any rational explanation of such unmitigable nonsense. Well, therefore, do the Committee of the Council, in their first Report, give it up, and say, "it is difficult to ascertain precisely its purport."

"The accomplished Director of the Government School of Design" talks of his principal duty in such a way that the Committee cannot for the life of them understand what he means!

Having thus presented some of the Director's conflicting statements as to whether he has or has not taught Design in the School—whether it can or cannot be taught—we proceed to show, from his own evidence, his non-performance of the duties he undertook to perform. It will be recollected, he was to teach the first class, "for instruction in the History, Principles, and Practice of Ornamental Design, and its application

to the various processes of Manufacture." It is, therefore, astonishing to find him replying as follows :—

"By whom during the last four months have those Principles of Design been taught?—I conceive it to be the duty of the *Masters* to do that.

"Are you aware whether that has been done?—I believe that, to the best of their ability, the Masters do it.

"But during the last four months you have had no means of knowing whether that has been done?—No.

"Then the School, as far as regards that part, has been entirely without your assistance?—Yes.

"You have stated that you thought that the Principles of Practical Design should be taught in every class and at every step?—Certainly, by the *Masters*.

"But you have no means of knowing that they have so taught them?—No."

Hence it appears that, first, he undertakes to do it himself; secondly, he shifts to the Masters the responsibility of doing it; and, thirdly, he knows not whether they have done it or not.

"The application of Design to the various processes of Manufacture" forms also a most important item in the Director's duties. To questions upon this point, here follow his replies :—

"You stated that you do not think that the conditions of Art, as applied to Manufactures, can be taught in the School?—I am quite sure of it."

"What means have the pupils, if not taught in the School, of becoming acquainted with those conditions?—None whatever."

To the following question,

"Is there any Class now in the School of Design to which students, having passed through the probationary stage, are taken, and instructed in the application of the Principles which they have previously learnt, to Manufactures and works of Ornament?"

Mr Townsend replies,

"There is at present no class of that kind in the School, unless you may call that a class which consisted last session of only two pupils, there being none at present."

Mr Redgrave is asked,

"Does such a class exist in the present School?"

And replies,

"Not at all."

And lastly, Mr Bellenden Ker, Vice-Chairman, says,—

"By referring to the duties of the Director, it will be observed that these are principally, to propose, in concert with the Masters, a complete system of teaching. This has not been done: and the Director, when applied to, tells me that, in order to find what has been done towards forming a system, the whole Minutes of the Council must be searched. I cannot find it even by searching.

"Next, the Director was to prepare Drawings and Original Designs for the use of the pupils, and to give courses of Lectures. No Designs have been made, nor has any course of Lectures been given."

With regard to the originality of designs produced in the Head School, we may exhibit a few passages from letters addressed to the Director, at his particular request, by some of the country Masters; in doing which we cannot but notice the humiliating nature of some of the secrets thus disclosed, and the curious process by which the Masters of the Provincial Schools produce *original* designs. The following interrogations referring to a certain design are by Mr Wilson, the replies by the Master of the Nottingham School:—

"Did I draw parts?—My impression is that I proportioned the parts and drew several details. I may, however, state, that in proportioning the parts I could not have proceeded at all without your help.

"Did I paint for you?—I cannot remember your giving me other help than advice in the painting portion. This, however, was most important to me.

"Did I help you in the arrangement of colour?—Most certainly. The whole of the colour arrangement, with the exception of the deep blue background and the white pavement, was yours, I believe. The former was suggested by Mr Gruner, and the latter by Mr Townsend."

An original design by a Master, of which he retains only an "impression of having drawn several details," in the proportioning of which he "could not proceed at all" without the help of another, and in which "the whole of the colour arrangement" was "most certainly" another's, except the blue behind and white before, which were respectively "suggested" by two other assistants! What could remain that was original, to deserve a public compliment, which was paid to this Master on the exhibition of his production, surpasses our comprehension.

The two following replies of Mr Murdoch, Master of the Potteries School, appear to be connected by some occult relation of cause and effect:—

"When you painted in the Palace, did I become security to Roberson for the colours?—You kindly did.

"Who was your first Master in Art?—I knew nothing of Art before I entered your class in Edinburgh, and I bless the day I did so."

It is to be observed that Mr Wilson's object in catechising these Country and Assistant-Masters was to elicit proofs of the importance of his assistance, and of his own prowess with the brush. He anxiously, and we must venture to say most unbecomingly, seeks *their* testimonies to his competence and fitness for his office as their Director.

In addressing Mr Stewart, Master of the Norwich School, respecting *his* original design, Mr Wilson says—

"Did I assist you in your large ornamental design?—Most decidedly.

"Did I work at it every day for long?—You *looked* at it every day.

"Did I draw or work on it?—A good deal; you did all the marbling."

The Director did all the marbling! The beautiful confusion and intricate tortuosity of the veining appear to have offered a theme so congenial to his habits of thought, and so suitable for the display of his peculiar powers of invention, that he could not resist the temptation of doing it all himself.

We cannot direct attention to *all* the evils complained of, but the following demands especial notice. The School contains a large collection of costly Books of Plates, Drawings, and Specimens of Art, purchased from a Parliamentary Grant of 10,000*l*. These valuable possessions, from difficulties of access, being rendered almost wholly useless, the Council issued an order that they should be made more available to the students; and in reference to this the Committee asked the Director—

"What is the actual means that the present pupils have of knowing what Books of Ornamental Drawing and Prints we have in our possession?—My own observations to them; that is all.

"Therefore a pupil to whom you make no observations is quite ignorant at present of the possessions of the Council?—He must be so.

"Have you any Catalogue?—No, we have no Catalogue.

"Then, in fact, at our School, at present, there is no practical access to those things, except when you particularly show them?—No; I should say there is not.

"But at present no pupil in the School has the means of knowing what are the possessions of the Council as regards Books of Ornamental Drawing except those which are exhibited, unless you happen to tell him?—Just so."

We come now to the evil agency of the Directorship, as the primary source of the wrongs and deficiencies complained of.

Mr Horsley, on being asked—

"Do you think that the present system of Directorship is attended with injury by the fact of its placing a barrier between the Masters, who see the whole working of the School, and the Members of the Council?" replies, "I think so, certainly. I consider that unless the Director is one of the Masters, and a most efficient Master, the office is utterly useless as regards the artistic conduct of the School. As far as I am concerned, there might be fifty Directors, if I thought it tended to the good working of the School; but the system in the School for the last year and a half has been, if I may use such a term, entirely stagnatory. You have a gentleman, who is called the Director, placed *in a false position*, by his undertaking to perform duties

for which his abilities do not qualify him ; and you may take what has happened during the last three months as a type of the whole proceedings of the School. Mr Wilson has not attended once, during the session, in the Evening School ; it has been left in the hands of the Masters, and yet they have not had sufficient power to be able to move a pupil from one class to another without the intervention and consent of the Director. I think such a state of things, if you will allow me to use a strong expression, *absurd*. As I said before, there might be fifty Directors in the School, did I not think that *half a one* would be injurious to its efficient working.

" Do you think that the Masters are degraded, and their exertions hindered, by the constant supervision of a Director?—I do decidedly think that the power at present possessed by the Director, of directing the efforts of men superior to himself in their particular departments, is *absurd*.'

Mr Horsley continues :—

" As far as I am able to understand Mr Wilson's Evidence, upon the important questions, as to whether a Class of Design should form a main feature of the School, and the desirability of Lectures, it would appear that he is opposed to both these propositions. If so, he offers the strongest argument against his continuance in the office he holds, seeing that the formation of a First Class, or Class of Design, and the delivery of a series of Lectures upon the ' History, Principles, and Practice of Ornament,' may be considered the only really important duties which he undertook to perform when he accepted the post of Director. I imagine that Mr Wilson himself does not claim any great position as an Artist. At the same time this would not prevent him from possessing a considerable amount of knowledge of Ornament, and great skill in imparting that knowledge ; and he may have this power ; but what I complain of is, that we should have no opportunity of knowing whether he possesses it or not, and that the students are not benefited by having that knowledge (if possessed) imparted to them."

Mr Dyce, A.R.A., says, —

" I think that no system of Directorship, as it respects teaching, will answer, which does not *bonâ fide* imply that the individual filling the situation is capable of conducting personally every branch of instruction in the School, from the lowest to the highest. The instruction of the higher class is one of the most positive and unalienable duties of the Director. The Lectures I of course reckon part of the Director's teaching. If his interference had no ulterior purpose—that is to say, if the Director had no class of his own into which the students taught by the Masters were to be admitted when they had made sufficient progress—nothing is more likely than that such interference should prove vexatious, and a real ' hindrance to the exertions' of the Masters. In such a case, a Director would be *worse than useless*."

That the case here supposed really exists, our extracts amply prove :—

" The present system of Directorship," says Mr Townsend, " is attended with inestimable injury in the fact of its placing a barrier between the gentlemen who see the whole working of the School, namely, the Masters, and the Members of the Council, who see but little of it. The latter Body is composed of gentlemen who seldom or never visit the classes, and who only occasionally attend the monthly meetings."

"I do firmly believe," says Mr Townsend, "that, at the present moment, the whole system is one which is not calculated to carry out the objects the Government had in starting the School."

Mr Ker states that—

"The anomalous situation and powers of the present Director probably led to the great loss the School sustained in the removal of Mr Herbert, an Artist of great celebrity, who for more than four years was the chief Master of the Figure Classes."

To the same effect, Mr Redgrave says that—

"From this clashing of the offices of Director and Masters, men of the highest talent have already been lost to the Schools, and it will, I am convinced, from personal knowledge of the working, again produce, if continued, the same result."

But upon this point we have the evidence of the Director himself, as follows:—

"Have you been aware of any collisions between the Managers, Directors, and Masters of the School and Board of Trustees in Edinburgh?—There never was a collision, to my knowledge.

"To what do you attribute that circumstance?—That there was very little interference with the Masters on the part of the Board. They were, as Artists, believed to be capable of conducting the classes entrusted to them, and the Board judged of their success by the results of the Annual Exhibition.

"What is your opinion, after your experience, as to the propriety of any person in the School having the power to interfere with the Masters?—My opinion is, that it would be greatly for the benefit of the School, and greatly for the public advantage, that the Masters should be responsible for their classes without being interfered with."

An opinion in which we cordially concur; and upon which we strongly advise the Director to act, by retiring from a position which, even to his own conviction, must surely appear untenable. His proper designation is "Superintendent of the School and Professor of Design." Nevertheless, we have seen that he has left unperformed the principal duty assigned to him—that of teaching Design; that he has not taught the class for instruction in the "History, Principles, and Practice of Ornamental Design;" that he has delivered no "Lectures" upon these subjects; that he has made no "Original Drawings and Designs;" that he has not attended, during the whole of the last session the principal School—that in the evening, containing at least 150 pupils—and that he has, at most, inspected the fifty small boys of the Morning School, engaged, as they are, in Elementary Drawing, and having the services of two separate Masters.

As for the business of directing the Provincial Schools, the extent of that is indicated by the amount of the Director's correspondence, which, it appears, averages one letter a day between twelve Schools. We have it upon Mr Wilson's own authority:—

"Can you give the Committee the average number per month of letters received and answered on the business of the Schools?—In the Director's department the letters received per month average about thirty, and the number sent about the same." *

The Director, it is stated, is required only to attend four hours in the morning—from eleven to three—on five days in the week; and to visit the Evening School three times a week, during ten months of the year; the vacations in the year consisting of about nine weeks, besides Saturday in each week of the session.—Total attendance about twenty hours a week—or sixteen, including vacations.

"But you are not aware, of course," says Professor Cockerell to Mr Horsley, "of the multiplicity of his duties out of the School, in the direction and management of the correspondence [one letter a day?]—I have seen (Mr Horsley replies) a great deal of Mr Wilson, and of his duties connected with the School, and I should not say they were such as to involve an overwhelming amount of labour. I do not think his attendance at the School, or his other labours connected with it, would make out a case of *very killing work*."

Some recondite quiddities of Professor Cockerell terminate this elaborate mass of Evidence. The learned Professor interrogates Mr Wilson in regard to Ornithology, and Mineralogy, in which, he says, the arrangement of colours is always

* For a specimen of the peculiar value and trustworthiness of the Director's official correspondence, the curious reader may refer to a printed Report of the Birmingham School, published in the *Art Union Journal* for July, 1846, in which the Committee of that School state that they have "a fact" to mention of "such importance," that "they lay it before their Society as communicated to them, through their Chairman, by C. H. Wilson, Esq., the accomplished Director of the London School of Design." This important fact was, that on the 22nd of January, 1846, there had been registered, in the Government Designs Registration Office, 33,133 designs for "some articles of metal, particularly stoves and fenders;" and that the sum of 99,564*l.* had been paid to Government "for this class of goods only." "On this," say the Committee, "no comment is necessary." Their exultation at so prodigious a demand for stoves and fenders, and their confidence in the authority of official communications from Somerset-house, appear to have induced them to receive this astounding information with deferential credulity; and ludicrous indeed must have been their astonishment on looking into the Parliamentary Return of the Designs Registration, just then published, to see the following statement of the truth:—That, so far from the total number of registered designs for *metal articles* having been 33,133, as per account of Mr Wilson, it was only 34,975 *for all the manufactures in the kingdom*, and for *metal* only 1,373; and the total amount paid to Government for the registration of *all* these designs, not 99,564*l.*, but only 9,673*l.* 18*s.* On this we shall only say, in the words of the Birmingham Committee, that "no comment is necessary."

prismatic" (for instance, in puddingstone), "and Osteology, as suggesting different forms of upholstery" (for example, a camp stool designed after the "Skull and Cross Bones"); also as to "Sphinges, as they are called," which Mr Wilson says he has "frequently considered"! These quaint esthetical subtleties we shall not presume to criticise. They may remind our readers of a certain definition of metaphysics: namely, that it is "when one man talks to another about what he does not understand, and the other does not understand what he is talking about."

We have thus presented an abstract of the remarkable statements in these Parliamentary Papers. To have fully reviewed them, and noticed all the proofs of neglect of the Council, of the inefficiency of the School, and of the incompetency, inconsistency, and prevarications of the Director, would have extended our task far beyond our limits. Sufficient has been done to show that in the Government School of Design there is no class for teaching Design, and all that can be obtained as to the Principles of Ornamental Design must come from gentlemen who, according to the Director's account, have no knowledge of Ornament; that no instruction in the application of Design to Manufactures is attempted; and that, notwithstanding the oft-repeated specious promises and laudatory announcements in its annual Reports and Prospectuses, and heavy outlays from the Treasury to procure Examples, it is become, in fact, simply a School of Copying —a mere Drawing School.

Why it has become what it is, is plainly evident from the statements of the Director and Masters.

The most important items in the prescribed Course of Instruction, and in the distinctly-defined duties of the Director, have been by the Council allowed to remain a dead letter.

The essentially requisite teaching which it was the Director's positive and unalienable duty to give, has never been given. The glaring incompetence of the chief officer, his incessant manœuvres to conceal it, and his evident jealousy of his colleagues, whom he has felt to be more accomplished than himself, have naturally caused indignant feelings among them, on finding themselves checked, and the usefulness of their agency impaired, by the exercise of influence based *only* upon official authority.

Why such a state of things has been allowed to continue for so long a period, and why the responsible Authorities of the School have so perversely closed their eyes to facts so repeatedly and earnestly urged upon their notice, can be

accounted for only by suppositions equally unfavourable to their intelligence, and to their sense of public duty.

The Council, appointed by the Board of Trade to manage the affairs of the School of Design and to control the Director, appear to have been chiefly occupied in legislating on frivolous details; in contending about the Director's contentions—counting noses on questions about his ever-varying, inconsistent, and restless alterations; or in extricating him and themselves from mess after mess, occasioned by his tortuous proceedings and artistical shortcomings; while he, as sole reporter and adviser to the Council, has been virtual appointer and dismisser of all the masters and students, awarder of prizes, recommender of purchases, expender of money—in short, Lord Rector, Oracular Dictator, right or wrong, and General Controller, especially of the Council, who have known nothing but upon his word, and have seen nothing but through his eyes. The Council appears to have consisted originally of 25 Members; but several having resigned—some, it is said, from splenetic infirmity of temper and disappointed monopoly of influence, others from disgust at the prevalent discord of the meetings and the growing difficulties of the management—the body has become reduced to fifteen. Of these, the greater number, it appears, either never attend, or attend only at long intervals—it may be to enforce a crotchet, or carry some partisan point on special occasions of dispute.

Such is the present state of the Government School of Design. With a Council in a ricketty state, dissolvent, and moribund; with every Master complainant and remonstrant; with the Director defendant and militant, and the students discouraged and listless,—what good results can be expected, what hope can be entertained? None, assuredly, while this disastrous combination of conflicting elements is permitted to exist and grow worse. The power to arrest the downward course of this important national institution lies wholly with the Board of Trade, from whom it emanated, and to whom it is amenable. The Board of Trade alone *can*, and to avoid incurring greater culpability than has fallen even upon the Council *must*, put forth promptly, firmly, and finally its arm of strength, and place the whole Establishment immediately under Government, dispensing altogether with the troublesome agency of any volunteer Council of prejudiced Academicians, would-be Connoisseurs, and antiquarian Dilettanti; since, "whatever Government gets done for nothing is always very dear at the price."

If there must be a Committee to confer with the Staff of Professors, and to superintend the educational arrangements, by all means let it be a Committee composed of at most half-a-dozen really eminent men, who, in virtue of their peculiar fitness, their high intelligence, their sound knowledge of Art-Education in all its applications to Ornament, their liberal views of its importance and commercial value, and their aptitude for business, would rectify and elevate our National Schools of Design, and be a guarantee to Government and the people, by whom they are supported, that the noble objects for which they were instituted, and the funds allowed for their maintenance, be not sacrificed to save incompetence from exposure, or to gratify individual caprice and pertinacity.

If, also, it really be at all requisite to have an officer in the capacity of Director—meaning by this designation Head Teacher and Manager—most undoubtedly he should be a man whose exalted and undeniable abilities, intellectual and moral as well as artistical, will ensure unfeigned and rational respect from the masters and students, and who can both scientifically explain to them the Theoretic Principles of Art, and show, by his own manual execution before them, the practical application of those principles.

To appoint to this office, and pertinaciously support in it, a man who has not the requisite qualifications, mental, moral, or manual—who is wholly unacquainted, not only with the Science and Philosophy of Art, but with all other science and philosophy, and who is not known to be able to draw and paint beyond "doing all the marbling," is to set the blind to lead the blind, with a great probability of both falling into the ditch, where, in fact, the School of Design and its Director are at the present time, and where they will most assuredly remain until the Board of Trade can command sufficient moral courage to do simply what is just and right.

In the present age of educational progress and universal diffusion of useful knowledge, it would be idle to entertain the question as to whether it is expedient that Schools of Design, intended to furnish the means of elevating the standard of taste with regard to industrial art, should be established and supported by Government; there being no doubt that such institutions, conducted with zeal and ability, must be of inestimable benefit to the interests of this great commercial country. It is simply incumbent upon us to determine upon the most efficient mode of forming and conducting them, in order to enable us to accomplish, and if

possible to exceed, the results already attained by the operation of such Institutions in other countries, with the productions of which our manufacturers have to compete in supplying our own markets.

That this can never be effected by any system of mere copying, or servile imitation of the art of other times, is self-evident. We should seek to produce novelties not only intrinsically beautiful, but essentially characteristic of our age and country.

The ancient styles of art were exquisitely adapted to, and naturally arose from, the wants, habits, and peculiar associations, historical and ideal, of the people for whose gratification the artists laboured. Hence the ardent, popular, and patriotic enthusiasm exhibited in cherishing and honouring that labour, and thereby multiplying and perfectionating its products.

In treating of what should be done to make the School of Design what it ought to be, we shall disregard all minor details, and merely gather from the Evidence before us the essential points and indispensable *desiderata*.

These we conceive to be—

First—A Museum of Archæological, Artistic, and Manufactural Examples, to be used for the purposes of *research*, *illustration*, and *copying*.

A Collection of valuable Books of Plates, for reference.

A Library of Reading Books, selected with a view of increasing the general scientific and artistic acquirements of the students.

A well-ventilated, well-lighted, and commodious suite of Apartments, fitted with every requisite for the purpose of Drawing, Painting, Modelling, Casting, &c. &c.

An extensive and well-selected supply of Flowers, Plants, and other productions of Nature, which are applicable to Ornament.

A Lecture-room, to render available such means of education.

Secondly — A judiciously-selected Staff of Professors, responsible as Heads of Departments, and as Lecturers.

Masters, chosen with equal care, for the constant supervision of the classes.

Occasional Lecturers.

Attendants.

As a plan of Art-Education, comprehending the whole that is necessary for a School of Ornamental Design, and presenting such an arrangement of the constituent parts as to faci-

litate their practical operation, we must direct attention to a scheme of education prepared by Mr Townsend (page 88 of the Committee's First Report).

Of this scheme the following is a brief analysis:—

A previous course of elementary study—that is, a probationary course, is supposed to have been undergone in some primary school.

A Class for the study of Geometrical Drawing and Perspective.

A Class for the study of The Figure, Men and Animals.

A Class for the study of Flowers, Fruit, and Landscape.

A Class for Painting, in its principles and applications.

A Class for Modelling.

Each Class comprising an Elementary Section, Special Lectures, and a Design Section.

Courses of General Lectures, on the History, Principles, and Practice of Ornament; and on the chief processes of Manufacture, as connected with Design.

Prizes, Premiums, and Public Exhibitions of the Productions of the Students.

Periodical Examinations, so conducted on Scientific Principles as to afford a true and equitable test of ability.

Formal Certificates of proficiency presented to distinguished Students would then command the respect of employers, and be highly serviceable in promoting engagements.

In the Report of the Committee we find that the foregoing Scheme has been made the basis of a somewhat different Programme of Education which the Committee recommend: but the peculiarity for which the Committee seem to prefer their arrangement, namely, its compression of Mr Townsend's five Classes into three, appears to us rather to render it objectionable, inasmuch as it becomes, by such compression, less practicable.

Thus far the absolute requisites for the educational portion of a School of Design.

In considering how such machinery can be most efficiently worked for the public benefit, we must bear in mind that the students will invariably subdivide themselves into two Classes —unascertained at first, but gradually developing their distinctive characteristics, as circumstances or natural talent call their powers into action. Some, engaged in mechanical occupations, and ungifted with special powers, may be expected to depart as skilled and educated workmen; while others, more bountifully endowed by Nature, will, after the careful

cultu e and exercise of their talents in the School, go forth as Designers and Ornamentists of the highest class, carrying into decorative art the refined sentiment, accurate knowledge, and masterly executive power, acquired by a systematic study of the Beautiful in Art and Nature.

Under such a system, the superior student would not only acquire intellectual power and manual skill, but would cherish a passion for his art—an inspiring desire to excel. If this first cause of all fine things be not excited and sustained by the incentive of expectant reward, talent will remain torpid, and the labours of its possessor will drag heavily on, without spirit and without profit. His hand must be animated and his eye be illumined by the Promethean fire of Emulation, which "prompts to be first, and rise above the rest."

To the Statesman, Patriot, Moral Philosopher, and Philanthropist, no less than to the Merchant, the Manufacturer, and the Operative, is the general cultivation and elevation of Taste interesting and important; the intelligent contemplation of physical beauty being a means by which we are rendered sensible of moral beauty, and the association of the beautiful with all that is virtuous and good, and of ugliness with all that is vicious and bad, being a natural law of the human mind. Indeed, Art-education in public schools, as a mental discipline, should be viewed as an important element of civilisation and intellectual improvement; inasmuch as, like other kinds of scholastic discipline, it is subservient to the formation of habits of attention and persevering application; it educates the eye to the perception of symmetry and proportion, confers a power of accurately observing external nature, exercises memory and imagination, and develops, augments, corrects, and refines the sensibility and judgment, which, applied to the Beautiful, we designate Taste; constantly proving to the student that "the highest excellence of every production of the hand is dependent upon the powers of the mind by which the hand is directed." The instruction to be given in a School of Ornamental Design implies, on the part of the instructor, at least a general knowledge of the Science of Mind; since, in order to exercise the student in *designing*—that is, in devising, and expressing visibly, new and beautiful ideal combinations of form and colour—he must not be ignorant of the nature, and means of methodically developing, the energies of the Imagerial Faculty, that is, the faculties of sensibility, perceiving, abstracting, and combining, that, collectively, constitute Imagination, which, as well as Taste, is *indefinitely improvable by educational training and exercise.*

It is natural to man to love novelty, to desire variety.

This feeling he acquires from observing the boundless multiformity of the Universe, and to the gratification of it the Designer must address his best exertions, if ambition actuates him to achieve the highest excellence in his profession. By systematic culture, and habitual exercise, the natural germ of his Inventive Faculty must be developed and perfectionated; his Imagination, by diligent study of the Beautiful in Nature and Art, must be enriched with stores of available materials; and his task must be to go on suggesting and representing new combinations and arrangements which, in virtue of their poetic freshness and artistic propriety, shall obtain the approval both of natural sentiment and critical knowledge. He must, in fact, produce Designs of his own.

In the Government School of Design, it appears to be thought, at least by the Director, that the whole use of Drawing and Painting is to copy the Designs of others, and the whole business of the Institution to educate *fac-simile* Draughtsmen, and to distribute Premiums for the plodding petrifactions of plagiarism. Can it, therefore, be matter of wonder that dire dissatisfaction and discord are rife among the masters and students? In such a system, what is there to sustain the lambent flame of genius; to brighten the glow of the Imagerial Faculty; to inspire one generous gleam of hope athwart the gloom of despair?

However, there needs to be no fear as to the ultimate accomplishment of a satisfactory reformation; seeing that a special Committee of the House of Commons to inquire into the whole subject stands announced for the forthcoming Session, when a squadron of Parliamentary Men-of-War, who have long been looming on the horizon, and watching the movements of the School of Design Managers, will probably bear down upon its stronghold of abuses, and by pouring in a series of demolishing broadsides, compel a prompt surrender to reason and common sense.

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